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Sixty-eighth session
Item 115 (c) of the provisional agenda*
Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections: election of fourteen members of the Human Rights Council

Note verbale dated 4 September 2013 from the Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

The Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Office of the President of the General Assembly and, regarding the decision of the Government of Cuba to present its candidature to the Human Rights Council for the period 2014-2016 at the elections to be held in New York in November 2013, has the honour to transmit the voluntary pledges and commitments of Cuba in the field of promotion and protection of human rights (see annex), in accordance with General Assembly resolution 60/251.

The Permanent Mission of Cuba requests that the present note verbale and its annex be circulated as a document of the General Assembly under item 115 (c) of the provisional agenda.

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Annex to the note verbale dated 4 September 2013 from the Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

Candidature of Cuba to the Human Rights Council, 2014-2016

Voluntary pledges and commitments pursuant to General Assembly resolution 60/251

1. Cuba attaches the greatest importance to international cooperation for the promotion and protection of human rights within the United Nations and, to that end, aspires to be elected as a member of the Human Rights Council.

2. Cuba participated actively and constructively in the negotiations that led to the establishment, institution-building and review of the Human Rights Council. The Cuban delegation submitted various proposals designed to ensure that the Council would serve as a forum for genuine dialogue and international cooperation on human rights, and to prevent its work from becoming tainted by the harmful practices of confrontation and political manipulation that put paid to the very existence of the Commission on Human Rights.

3. Cuba remains committed to promoting consideration of the just historical demands of the peoples of the South and of the large majority worldwide on issues such as the right to food; effective realization of the right to development; combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance; ensuring full respect for the principles of universality, indivisibility, objectivity and non-selectivity in strengthening cooperation on human rights matters; and promoting the right to peace; cultural rights, including respect for cultural diversity; and the right to international solidarity and to a just, democratic and equitable international order, pursuant to article 28 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. **Cuba will continue to increase the attention paid to these just demands of individuals and peoples in its capacity as the main sponsor of some 10 draft resolutions in the Human Rights Council.**

4. Cuba reaffirms its readiness to continue working tirelessly to achieve the shared goal of enabling all individuals and peoples throughout the world to enjoy all human rights, on the basis of respect for the Charter of the United Nations, the internationally agreed human rights instruments and the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action. **Cuba reiterates its commitment to international cooperation in the promotion and protection of human rights.**

5. In May 2006, Cuba was elected as a founding member of the Human Rights Council for the period 2006-2009. In 2009, it was re-elected for the period 2009-2012.

6. Cuba has fulfilled its commitment to the universal periodic review mechanism and successfully presented its first and second national reports in February 2009 and May 2013 respectively. **Cuba reaffirms its commitment to continue strengthening this mechanism and will work to consolidate the cooperation approach that inspired its establishment. At the same time, Cuba remains committed to addressing and implementing the recommendations which it accepted under that process and will work tirelessly to that end.**

7. Cuba is a State party to most of the international human rights instruments and a signatory to many others, and it has fulfilled its periodic reporting obligations to the bodies established to monitor compliance. **Cuba will continue working to fulfil its international human rights obligations.**

8. Cuba has a long record of international cooperation in the area of human rights, demonstrating through concrete actions its unequivocal willingness to engage in frank and open dialogue. Cuba is a State party to most of the main international human rights instruments and a signatory to many others.

9. Cuba cooperates systematically with the special procedures of the Human Rights Council and responds in a timely manner to their requests for information. Cuba has been visited by several of these mandate holders. **Cuba will continue to cooperate with all procedures of a universal nature established by the Council.**

10. Cuba maintains ongoing cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and remains committed to working constructively to ensure equitable geographical representation in the Office's staffing. Cuba was one of the first countries to be visited by the High Commissioner for Human Rights, barely a year after that post was established. **Cuba will continue to cooperate on strengthening the capacity of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to carry out its mandate.**

11. Cuban women and men have made significant progress in the enjoyment of all their human rights, overcoming major obstacles and threats posed by the unilateral embargo policy and hostility that they face. Their achievements range from economic, social and cultural rights to civil and political rights, as well as the realization of so-called third-generation or solidarity rights.

12. In Cuba, equality and non-discrimination are fully guaranteed. Outstanding progress has been made with regard to gender issues. The Cuban Government continues to implement numerous laws, policies and programmes in order to strengthen those gains. Institutional racism has been eradicated, the most disadvantaged groups have been provided with ample opportunities for self-improvement and with real benefits, and every effort is being made to ensure full and effective equality of opportunity for historically disadvantaged groups and dysfunctional families. **Cuba remains determined to step up the fight against racism, racial discrimination and all forms of discrimination on any grounds as a matter of priority for the international agenda and human rights cooperation. Cuba will continue to promote the rights of women, children, young people, and individuals of all ages, including older persons, those with disabilities, migrants, indigenous peoples and minorities, and will combat scourges such as poverty, the trafficking and smuggling of persons and terrorism, among others, while consistently upholding respect for internationally agreed rules and standards.**

13. Cuba's important achievements in such areas as health, education, scientific and technical research, culture and sports are well known. However, what has been hidden or distorted is the fact that all this has been possible precisely because the Cuban people are the masters of their political fate and the country's resources, exercise the fullest power and control over the life of the nation, and participate actively in the effective system of democracy that they designed and approved in a universal plebiscite.

14. Many of the peoples of the world share the high ethical standards and noble principles of selfless solidarity that guide the conduct of the Cuban people in their international activities. Tens of thousands of Cubans shared the fate of millions of their brothers and sisters in the struggles against colonialism and apartheid. Today, there are more than 50,000 Cuban cooperation workers in the remotest villages, mountains and hard-to-reach places in more than 100 nations, sharing Cuba's achievements in the fields of health care and education with those peoples. **Cuba remains committed to international cooperation, sharing its modest resources according to its means.**

15. Cuba hopes to join the Council as a country where no one is unprotected or deprived of dignity, where all children have a quality education, the sick have the best medical care and the elderly have social protection; a country where the rights of all workers, farmers, intellectuals and students are protected by law; a place where citizens are safe, without organized crime or drugs. Cuba seeks to join the Council as a united people, with deep social cohesion; a country where no one has been extrajudicially executed, tortured or disappeared, where there are no kidnappings or secret prisons. **Cuba remains committed to international cooperation for the promotion of justice, equity, democracy and all human rights for all, including the rights to peace and development, both nationally and internationally.**

16. There have been important economic and social changes in Cuba. Progress has been made in improving State institutions and in furthering citizen participation and control as the foundation of our democracy, and efforts are ongoing to achieve sustainable development with social justice.

17. One development of great significance was the adoption by the National Assembly of the People's Power of the Social and Economic Policy Guidelines, which are a set of decisions needed to update the Cuban social and economic model and a Government programme. **Cuba remains committed to its irrevocable decision to advance its socialist, indigenous, innovative, democratic and fully inclusive development.**

18. The aforementioned Guidelines were adopted after a very wide public debate in which millions of Cubans, with complete freedom, made more than 400,000 amendments, changing two thirds of the draft, and voted on each of its 12 chapters. It was an unusual exercise in consulting citizens directly in order to achieve a consensus on the Government's economic, monetary and social policies and measures to overcome the effects of the global economic crisis and Cuba's economic problems without resorting to neo-liberal remedies or shock policies.

19. New regulations have been adopted to expand the legislative basis for human rights, including, inter alia, those related to social security, housing, employment and self-employment, and granting land in usufruct. In addition, progress is being made in improving and updating the country's legal system by implementing a set of changes that address the needs of Cuban society and meet the highest international standards in this area. These include amendments to the Migration Act, which have had a huge impact and improved relations between Cuba and its emigrants, despite the constant political manipulation of the question of migration. **Cuba will continue to strengthen the democratic nature of its institutions, with popular and inclusive laws, policies and programmes, in accordance with the aspirations of its people.**

20. The legal system to protect human rights in Cuba is not limited to the provisions set out in the Constitution. It is properly developed and implemented through other substantive and procedural regulations in force, in line with the rights recognized under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights instruments.

21. The rights to life, liberty and security of person are based on the principle of respect for human dignity, and form the basis for the actions of the Cuban authorities and for the functioning of society as a whole.

22. The Cuban prison system is based on the principle of human betterment. Cuba complies with the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners and emphasizes a preventive approach based on numerous social programmes, including those that seek to turn prisons into education centres.

23. **Cuba remains unequivocally willing to engage in dialogue on all issues and with all States, based on mutual respect, sovereign equality and recognition of the right of peoples to self-determination.**

24. **Cuba will continue to contribute in a decisive manner to consolidating an approach based on cooperation and constructive dialogue in the work of the United Nations human rights machinery; it is therefore essential to combat any attempts at political manipulation of the work of the Human Rights Council.**

25. **Should it be elected, Cuba will endeavour to live up to the requirements of the mandate conferred by the States Members of the United Nations General Assembly.**

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General Assembly

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Sixty-eighth session
Item 21 (e) of the provisional agenda*
Globalization and interdependence: international migration and development

Summary of the informal interactive hearings of the General Assembly with representatives of non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations and the private sector held pursuant to resolution 67/219

Note by the President of the General Assembly

I. Introduction

1. The informal interactive hearings of the General Assembly with representatives of non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations and the private sector were held on 15 July 2013, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 67/219 of 21 December 2012.

2. The hearings were organized by the President of the General Assembly in consultation with Member States and representatives of non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, civil society organizations, and the private sector. The hearings were part of the preparatory process for the high-level dialogue on international migration and development to be held at United Nations Headquarters during the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly, on 3 and 4 October 2013.

3. The President of the General Assembly established a task force composed of representatives of non-governmental organizations, civil society networks and the private sector to advise him on the preparation of the hearings. Pursuant to resolution 67/219, the participation of civil society organizations in the informal hearings was based on recommendations submitted by the Secretary-General with respect to their specific expertise and involvement in international migration and development issues. The proposed list of participating civil society organizations was subsequently considered by Member States on a no-objection basis.

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4. The hearings were attended by more than 300 representatives of non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, civil society organizations not in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, and the private sector, about 80 Member States and numerous representatives of international organizations.

5. The main objective of the hearings was to identify concrete measures to strengthen coherence and cooperation at all levels, with a view to enhancing the benefits of international migration for migrants and countries alike and its important links to development, while reducing its negative implications, the overall theme of the high-level dialogue of 2013.

6. The President of the General Assembly and the Deputy Secretary-General made opening statements. This was followed by an opening panel, four interactive panel discussions, and presentations by young migrants. The opening panel took stock of the progress made by civil society in advancing the global migration agenda since the first high-level dialogue in 2006, discussed expectations for the forthcoming high-level dialogue and presented recommendations for follow-up. Peter Sutherland, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on International Migration and Development, participated in the opening panel as one of the speakers. The themes of the four panel discussions, mirroring the themes of the four round tables of the 2013 high-level dialogue, were migrant labour and mobility; migrant rights and protection; human development and diaspora action; and migration governance and partnerships. At the end of the hearings, the rapporteur presented main conclusions and recommendations, while a representative of the Office of the President of the General Assembly made a closing statement. The programme of the hearings is annexed.

II. Key findings

7. The hearings demonstrated the collective commitment of Member States, observers, observer States, non-governmental organizations, civil society and the private sector to making tangible progress at the high-level dialogue on international migration and development to be held in 2013. Participants stressed that since the first high-level dialogue, in 2006, Member States, civil society and international organizations had engaged in constructive debates and had shared experiences and good practices related to international migration and development. This had promoted understanding and trust. It was now time to transform the dialogue into an action-oriented agenda with concrete policy recommendations and follow-up.

8. Civil society presented an eight-point, five-year action agenda and proposed to engage with Member States in developing an action programme with indicators and benchmarks, to be endorsed at the high-level dialogue and carried forward through intergovernmental processes.

9. Participants emphasized the need for a comprehensive, rights-based, gender-sensitive and migrant-centred approach to migration and development. The human rights and fundamental freedoms of all migrants, regardless of their migration status, had to be respected in order to realize the full benefits of migration. Governments had to ensure that migration was safe, legal and humane. The vulnerabilities of children, young people, women, disabled people and migrants in irregular situations were highlighted. A rights-based approach to migration entailed

equal access of all migrants to public services, such as education, health care, housing, social security and justice; as well as equal pay and the right to join labour unions.

10. Speakers recognized that most migrants crossed international borders in search of decent work and a better or safer life. They urged Governments to ratify and implement the core international human and labour rights instruments, particularly those protecting migrant workers and their families.

11. In order to reduce the economic and human costs of migration, the participants stressed the need to improve the regulatory frameworks for labour recruitment. In particular, participants called for developing and implementing recruitment standards, for the licensing, monitoring and sanctioning of recruitment agencies, and for making employers pay for the recruitment of workers. Predeparture training and skills matching before people moved abroad were viewed as beneficial for both workers and employers.

12. Governments were called upon to expand opportunities for all citizens to achieve sustainable livelihoods at home. With decent work and adequate living conditions available in countries of origin, migration would occur out of choice, not necessity.

13. Recent political and environmental crises had highlighted the plight of migrants and their families stranded in dire humanitarian situations. While those victims should be assisted and protected on a needs-first basis, it was also important to develop a general framework to define and guarantee the rights of migrants in those circumstances in the long run. The framework should encompass the principles of non-discrimination, non-refoulement and family unity, and include norms and effective practices regarding mixed migration flows. Civil society participants recommended that such a framework also cover migrants who were victims of violence and trauma in countries of transit as well as migrants in acute conflict or disaster-related crises.

14. The hearings underlined the positive impact international migration could have on development in both countries of origin and countries of destination. Considering that migrants and diaspora communities played an important role by sending remittances back home, by acting as conduits for knowledge and information, and by spreading new ideas, attitudes and behaviours, they should be embraced as partners in development. Member States were urged to engage diaspora groups in their development planning. Concrete measures to enhance the contributions of expatriate communities included granting dual citizenship and voting rights, ensuring the portability of social benefits, including pensions, as well as mutual recognition of diplomas, qualifications and skills.

15. Participants emphasized the need for timely, reliable and easily accessible data and analysis for evidence-based policymaking and informed public debate. The high-level dialogue provided a unique opportunity to set in motion a plan for sustained capacity development to assist countries in improving the collection and use of migration data.

16. There was consensus that migration, an enabler of global development, should be integrated into the post-2015 United Nations development agenda. As part of the broader sustainable development agenda, specific targets and indicators should be

defined in order to monitor progress in implementing measures intended to enhance the benefits of migration and address its challenges.

17. There was widespread agreement that cooperation, partnership and coherence should be strengthened at all levels, including among Member States, civil society, the private sector, migrants and international organizations. The State-led Global Forum on Migration and Development had become an important venue in which to informally discuss policies, challenges and opportunities related to migration and to engage with all stakeholders. Participants recommended that inter-agency coherence on migration, especially through the Global Migration Group, should be strengthened. There was wide consensus that migrants and migration, and the global governance thereof, should be firmly anchored in the United Nations agenda and in the work programmes of United Nations entities. Civil society representatives called for the establishment of a regular and action-oriented dialogue between Member States, civil society, the private sector and members of the Global Migration Group.

III. Opening

18. The President of the General Assembly opened the hearings by welcoming the representatives of non-governmental organizations, civil society, the private sector, employer organizations and labour unions, diaspora networks, advocacy groups, and the research community. He thanked the civil society steering committee for its hard work in preparing the hearings and for proposing an agenda that closely resembled that of the high-level dialogue.

19. The Deputy Secretary-General observed that migration was one of the few constants of human history, affecting all countries. Migration was at an all-time high and continued to increase in volume, scope, complexity and impact. Migration within the global South was almost as common as migration from the South to the North, creating both opportunities and challenges for development worldwide. Although most migrants crossed international borders in search of better job or educational opportunities, many were compelled to migrate by poverty, violence, conflict and natural disasters.

20. Many migrants had fallen victim to smuggling and trafficking, suffered discrimination, xenophobia and racism, were subjected to inhumane working conditions, or lacked access to adequate health care, education and housing. Migration presented both challenges and opportunities to the global community, and a global response was needed to harness its benefits and minimize its negative consequences. The speakers called for a coherent, humane, rights- and facts-based, action-oriented global agenda on international migration, founded on dialogue and cooperation at the global, regional, bilateral, national and local levels.

21. Both the President of the General Assembly and the Deputy Secretary-General underlined the crucial role of non-governmental organizations, civil society and the private sector as they worked with migrants on a daily basis. The voices of migrants were also important and should be taken into account in formulating policies. Further, civil society was instrumental in helping to dispel negative perceptions and stereotypes of migrants.

22. Strong partnerships, in particular with civil society, were essential in strengthening the benefits of migration and in improving the situation of migrants.

The contributions, perspectives and experiences of civil society constituted a key input for the high-level dialogue, not the least by giving the deliberations a "human face".

23. Building on the momentum of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development of 2012, the high-level dialogue of 2013 presented an important opportunity to identify ways to include migration in national development policies and plans and the post-2015 United Nations development agenda. Indeed, the eight-point action agenda of civil society recommended that migrants and migration be included in the post-2015 development agenda. Both speakers urged civil society organizations to work closely with their national Governments to ensure that this topic was duly highlighted at the high-level event.

IV. Opening panel

24. Panellists took stock of the progress achieved in advancing the global migration debate since the first high-level dialogue. They also presented their expectations for the forthcoming high-level dialogue and its follow-up. Civil society representatives acknowledged that the first high-level dialogue had inaugurated an era of constructive engagement between civil society organizations, the private sector and Governments. However, it was now time to move towards a "transformative dialogue" with concrete policy recommendations and follow-up action.

25. The eight-point, five-year action agenda was conceptualized at the meeting of the Global Forum on Migration and Development in Mauritius and the World Social Forum on Migration in the Philippines, both held in 2012, and further elaborated during a series of regional, thematic and national civil society consultations, organized from May to July 2013. Using the eight-point plan as a basis, civil society expressed its preparedness to work with Member States to develop an action programme for endorsement at the high-level dialogue. Implementation of that programme could be reviewed at future intergovernmental meetings, including those of the Global Forum.

26. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General on International Migration and Development recalled that, while there was limited recognition of the contribution of civil society during the first high-level event in 2006, civil society had become a strong and valued partner on the eve of the second high-level dialogue. He expressed appreciation for the practical and focused eight-point agenda, which addressed specific challenges and included concrete policy recommendations. He expected that civil society would make a meaningful contribution to the upcoming high-level dialogue, in particular by helping to define priorities for the next decade on which all actors could agree.

V. Theme 1: Migrant labour and mobility

A. Labour migration and human rights

27. Participants representing both workers and employers emphasized that the deepening globalization of production and labour markets continued to drive international movement of people. However, migrant workers and their families continued to be at risk of abuse and exploitation in both formal and informal labour markets. Governments should ensure the protection, promotion and fulfilment of the human rights of all migrants, regardless of their status. They were urged to ratify and implement the core international human rights and labour rights instruments, particularly those protecting migrant workers, such as the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, of 1990, as well various conventions and provisions promulgated by the International Labour Organization (ILO). The high-level dialogue of 2013 should reaffirm the leadership of the United Nations, especially ILO, in upholding the rights of labour migrants.

B. Labour migration and decent work

28. While international migration was a positive experience for millions of migrant workers and their families, many suffered from poor working and living conditions. In particular, many migrants were subjected to low wages, unsafe work environments, a virtual absence of a social safety net, denial of freedom of association and workers' rights, discrimination and xenophobia. Circular migration programmes often curtailed the rights of migrants and their families and should be replaced by migration policies which focused on family reunification and included paths to citizenship. Participants called for decent work for all, in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity, both at home and abroad.

29. Rather than focusing solely on migration management strategies, the high-level dialogue should promote the formulation of national development strategies to address poverty and other root causes of international migration. Domestic labour markets should be strengthened, allowing people to find decent work and adequate living conditions at home, thereby promoting the right not to migrate. In short, migration should occur out of choice, not necessity. While migration could contribute to human development outcomes, it was not a substitute for national development policies.

C. Ethical and responsible recruitment of migrant workers

30. Reducing the costs of labour migration had considerable potential for increasing the gains from migration, especially benefiting migrant workers and their families. In this regard, panellists recommended stricter regulations of the recruitment industry and combating abusive practices. They urged Member States to (a) establish ethical and responsible standards for the recruitment of workers, in accordance with those of ILO; (b) strengthen the licensing of recruitment agencies; (c) impose penalties and sanctions on agencies that violate rules and standards; and (d) implement user-led review and monitoring systems for recruitment agencies.

Further, fees for using the services of recruitment agencies should be borne by employers rather than being charged to migrant workers.

31. In the ensuing debate, some Member States gave examples of their efforts to regulate the recruitment industry and called on civil society to help them in this urgent task. They recognized the benefits of skills assessments before deployment and predeparture training, which would reduce the social and financial costs of labour migration. The benefits of migration could be enhanced by ensuring the portability of social security and other acquired rights as well as allowing migrant workers to obtain dual nationality.

VI. Theme 2: Migrant rights and protection

A. Ratification of United Nations human rights instruments

32. Participants stressed that international migration, human rights and development were intrinsically connected. Respecting the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all migrants, regardless of their migration status, was essential for reaping the full benefits of migration. Governments had to ensure that migration was safe, orderly and humane.

33. As relatively few Member States had ratified relevant migration-related human rights instruments, participants repeated their call to Member States to ratify and implement core human rights instruments, including the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. Children, women, persons with disabilities and migrants in an irregular situation crossing international borders were especially vulnerable to violence, exploitation and abuse and were in need of protection.

34. Almost all countries were affected by migrant smuggling and human trafficking. Governments should strengthen their efforts to combat these forms of transnational crime and assist victims by providing access to services, justice and protection from refoulement.

35. Several speakers stressed the need to combat xenophobia and negative rhetoric directed at migrants. They called on all stakeholders to create greater public awareness about the positive contributions of migrants to countries of origin and destination as well as about their struggles, personal experiences, rights and responsibilities.

B. Migrant children and women migrants

36. Panellists observed that while migration could be an empowering experience, young and female migrants were particularly at risk of violence, exploitation and abuse, and often lacked access to basic services, such as education, housing, justice and health care, including sexual and reproductive health. A rights-based approach to migration entailed equal access to these services by all migrants, irrespective of their status.

37. Member States were urged to ensure that migrant children had access to the rights and protections guaranteed by the Convention on the Rights of the Child and

end the widespread practice of detaining migrant children. Women and children of international migrants who remained in the home country should continue to have equal access to public services, rights, protection and social support, even with their spouses living overseas, and they should be included in national development programmes.

C. Migrants in crisis, distress and transit situations

38. Recent crises had drawn attention to the plight of labour migrants stranded in dire conditions. Assistance and protection should be driven by a needs-first principle. Gaps in protection and assistance, especially for women and children, should be addressed.

39. Participants called for the establishment of a general framework for identifying and guaranteeing the rights of those who moved in the context of humanitarian crises or were victims of trauma in transit. They also asked that the roles and responsibilities of Governments, the private sector and the international community be clarified in this regard. Some participants observed that the framework should also apply to migrants trapped in forced labour, transit or other destitute situations. The framework should incorporate principles of non-discrimination, non-refoulement and family unity, as well as norms and effective practices regarding mixed migration flows.

40. Governments were urged to improve their border management practices and to train border guards with a view to establishing appropriate responses to migrants in transit and crisis. Detention should be a last resort, and those detained should have access to effective justice. Participants called upon Member States to expand opportunities for regular migration, including for unskilled workers, instead of relying solely on border security and the externalization of border controls. Several participants asked for a clear distinction between agencies providing services to migrants and those focusing on enforcement and securing borders. Furthermore, addressing poverty and other root causes of migration would result in fewer irregular border crossings and a reduction in migrant smuggling.

41. Participants urged regional cooperation mechanisms, including consultative processes, to take up the issue of migrants caught in crises and transit. Following the 2013 high-level dialogue, a multi-stakeholder migrants-in-distress group should be established, whose main task would be to develop an inventory of relevant legal documents, guidelines and practices in order to identify gaps in protecting and assisting vulnerable migrants. This group would include representatives of Member States, international organizations, civil society as well as the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants. In addition, a civil society working group would act as the liaison between civil society organizations and the multi-stakeholder group.

42. Representatives of Member States and international organizations applauded the work of civil society organizations in responding to the needs of migrants in crisis, especially during recent events in Libya and the Syrian Arab Republic, and urged them to continue their important work. Some speakers drew attention to the initiative of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on International Migration and Development to address the plight of migrants affected by civil conflict and other man-made and natural disasters. In taking this initiative forward,

Member States were urged to focus particularly on preparedness, protection and coordination.

43. Regarding effective protection practices, it was noted that several frameworks already existed, such as the 10-point plan of action for refugee protection and mixed migration, developed by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the migration crisis operational framework, initiated by the International Organization for Migration, and the international framework for action to implement the protocols relating to human trafficking and smuggling of migrants to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, spearheaded by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. Governments, civil society and the international community were called upon to enhance their collaboration in implementing those protection initiatives. Enforcement activities directed at migrants in crisis and transit situations should be suspended.

VII. Youth perspectives

44. By highlighting their personal experiences, three young migrants underlined the importance of a rights-based approach to international migration and development. Migrants were human beings with families, hopes, dreams, and intrinsic rights that Governments must respect, protect and promote. Whether as migrants living abroad or as citizens living in their countries of origin, all people had basic civil, political, economic, cultural and social rights that must be safeguarded. Children and adolescents were particularly vulnerable to violence, exploitation and abuse. Unaccompanied, left behind, or in an irregular status, young people often faced detention, deportation or lack of access to basic rights and services.

45. The young migrants emphasized that migration should be a choice, not a necessity. They urged countries to create conditions that would permit all citizens to forge sustainable livelihoods at home. Recalling their own personal experiences, speakers emphasized that those who moved contributed to development. Migrants should not be considered a threat, but as people seeking to improve their overall well-being whose actions benefited both countries of origin and countries of destination. With a view to the high-level dialogue of 2013 and future global migration debates, all speakers highlighted the importance of including migrants in such meetings. Their voices should be heard and would remind delegates of the human dimensions of global migration, firmly anchoring the debate in the realities on the ground.

VIII. Theme 3: Human development and diaspora action

A. Migrants and diaspora: global partners in development

46. Panellists acknowledged the potential for enhancing the positive contribution of diaspora communities to development at home and abroad. Members of diaspora groups served as important conduits for transmission of knowledge and information, supported home communities financially through remittances, and acted as entrepreneurs or philanthropists. Given these and other contributions, policymakers should develop policies and programmes fostering diaspora engagement.

47. Migrants and diaspora communities who were well integrated in their countries of destination were in a better position to contribute to their countries of origin than those who were not. Several participants recommended that diaspora groups should be considered as full-fledged partners in development. For this partnership to work, institutions needed to understand, acknowledge, value and support the role of migrants and diaspora communities and work with them collaboratively to achieve tangible and practical results for greater human development.

48. Speakers reiterated that human rights and development were closely linked, and that respect for the human rights and freedoms of all migrants was essential for reaping the benefits of migration. Migrants in an irregular status were especially reluctant to join diaspora organizations. Panellists therefore urged Member States to be supportive of diaspora organizations regardless of the migration status of their members. Concrete measures, such as granting dual citizenship, voting rights, portability of social benefits, including pensions, and recognition of diplomas, qualifications and skills could leverage diaspora contributions and would promote the circulation and return of migrants.

B. Capacity development of diaspora communities

49. Although Governments increasingly acknowledged the importance of diaspora engagement for development, diaspora groups were often unable to fully engage with other actors. There was growing demand for diaspora groups to channel financial flows, support long-term investments, and transfer knowledge in order to foster entrepreneurship and innovation at home and abroad. Access to business networks, loans, matching funds or competitive grants, and business training were needed to fully realize the contribution of diasporas to development. Some participants called for funding schemes that supported small-scale development initiatives of migrants, for example the European Commission-United Nations Joint Migration and Development Initiative, funded by the European Commission.

C. Migration, migrants and the post-2015 United Nations development agenda

50. Participants advocated for the inclusion of international migration in the post-2015 United Nations development agenda. Migration was integral to development processes and a factor that influenced development in countries of both origin and destination. When supported by the right set of policies, international migration could be a positive force for development. Concrete indicators and targets on migration should be identified in order to monitor the progress of implementing measures aimed at enhancing the benefits and addressing the challenges of migration. Some participants advocated for the inclusion of migration as a stand-alone goal, while others suggested that migration could be part of other development goals, such as those focusing on poverty reduction or development partnerships. Those who moved should be given the means, rights and protection to develop their full potential and thereby contribute to development in countries of origin and destination.

D. Improvement of the evidence base

51. Participants pointed out that evidence-based policymaking and informed public debate require timely, reliable and easily accessible data and analysis. While mortality, fertility, and international migration were known to be the three components of global demographic change, international migration was the least understood of these phenomena. Since their establishment, the Population and Statistics Divisions of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat had been the leading sources of reliable global demographic estimates and projections; however, their work relied heavily on national data-collection systems which often yielded migration data that were deficient in quality or quantity.

52. The high-level dialogue provided a unique opportunity to encourage sustained capacity-building in the area of migration data. Timely and comparable data on migrant stocks and migration flows, with information on country of birth, country of citizenship and country of previous residence and disaggregated by age, sex, and levels of education and skills, were critically needed. Relevant information systems required urgent improvement. In order to address data gaps and deficiencies, some participants recommended conducting a global assessment of available data and capacities. A joint effort of the United Nations, Member States and research institutions would be instrumental in strengthening technical infrastructure and expertise to improve the evidence base on international migration.

IX. Theme 4: Migration governance and partnerships

A. A rights-based, gender-sensitive and migrant-centred approach to migration and development

53. Panellists recognized that much had been achieved in strengthening dialogue and cooperation in the field of international migration and development since the first high-level dialogue in 2006. Civil society had become an active and respected participant in global debates and was well prepared for the forthcoming high-level event. At the same time, the internationalization of markets and increasing mobility called for new levels of engagement and cooperation among Governments, civil society, migrants, diaspora groups, employer associations, organized labour and the private sector. Examples of good practices and models of good governance on the part of those actors in the field of migration at international, bilateral, national and local levels, notably including cities and local authorities, could inform the future course of debates and partnerships.

54. A rights-based, gender-sensitive and migrant-centred approach to migration and development was urgently needed. The eight-point, five-year action agenda of civil society, which identified key issues and policy recommendations for consideration at the high-level dialogue, was very relevant in this regard. The right to remain, to emigrate and to return as well as the principles of non-discrimination and non-criminalization of migrants must be recognized by all.

B. Partnership, cooperation and coherence

55. As a global phenomenon, migration required a global response. Participants underlined the importance of partnerships, cooperation and coherence at all levels. The Global Forum on Migration and Development provided a useful platform for informal dialogue between Governments, civil society being recognized as an important interlocutor. The Global Migration Group was an important mechanism for closer United Nations inter-agency collaboration. There was consensus that migrants and migration, and the global governance thereof, should be firmly anchored in the United Nations agenda, and in the work programmes of United Nations agencies. Representatives of civil society called for the creation of new platforms for regular interaction between Member States, civil society, the private sector and the members of the Global Migration Group.

56. Participants pointed out the importance of practical cooperation, in particular at the local level. Cities, where most migrants resided, played a key role in developing policies that protected the rights of migrants and enhanced their contributions at home and abroad. So far, the private sector, development actors and migrants were still underrepresented in debates and in active policymaking on migration. Including those voices would contribute to the elaboration of a concrete rights-based, gender-sensitive and migrant-centred approach to migration and development.

X. Conclusion

57. The rapporteur for the informal hearings noted that the preparations of civil society for the high-level dialogue of 2013 had been much more systematic than for the first high-level dialogue, particularly with regard to participation, understanding, advocacy and organization. Above all, civil society was mindful of the historic opportunity the upcoming dialogue presented and stood ready to collaborate with Member States to work on concrete actions to enhance the benefits of migration for all concerned over the course of the next five years.

58. It was time to move towards a "transformative dialogue" with concrete policy recommendations and follow-up action. Civil society's eight-point, five-year action agenda detailed key issues and presented recommendations aimed at protecting migrants, ensuring respect for their rights and fostering the benefits of international migration for development. The rapporteur expressed the hope that the high-level dialogue would usher in a new era of constructive cooperation allowing for the formulation of common goals and objectives with appropriate monitoring and follow-up.

59. A representative of the Office of the President of the General Assembly thanked all panellists, presenters and participants for taking part in, and contributing to, the hearings. In line with the overall objective of the high-level dialogue, the hearings had successfully identified a number of concrete measures for strengthening coherence and cooperation in the field of international migration and development. He hoped that the discussions would continue at all levels over the coming months with a view to informing the high-level dialogue in October. The Office was looking forward to receiving nominations for representatives who would be speaking on behalf of civil society at the high-level event in October. The high-level dialogue was a unique opportunity for all, including civil society, to advance the agenda on international migration and development and to propose concrete steps and follow-up actions for improving the well-being of migrants and non-migrants alike.

Annex

Programme of the informal interactive hearings of the General Assembly with representatives of non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations and the private sector

10 a.m.-1 p.m.	**Morning meeting**
10 a.m.-10.15 a.m.	Opening of the hearings
	Statement by the President of the General Assembly
	Statement by the Deputy Secretary-General
10.15 a.m.-10.50 a.m.	Opening panel: Looking back and looking beyond the 2013 high-level dialogue
10.50 a.m.-11.55 a.m.	Theme 1: Migrant labour and mobility
11.55 a.m.-1 p.m.	Theme 2: Migrant rights and protection
3 p.m.-6 p.m.	**Afternoon meeting**
3 p.m.-3.35 p.m.	Youth perspectives: voices of change
3.35 p.m.-4.40 p.m.	Theme 3: Human development and diaspora action
4.40 p.m.-5.45 p.m.	Theme 4: Migration governance and partnerships
5.45 p.m.-6 p.m.	Closing of the hearings
	Statement by the rapporteur
	Statement by a representative of the Office of the President of the General Assembly